

raised their skirts over their knees and wiggled around. Dick Dale took Polaroids and said over the microphone to the audience and to us that we weren't getting older we were only getting better and over the whistles and applause I heard one of his 20-ish waitresses laugh and say to a cohort "Yeah, sure," knowing that she would never show up to any reunion of any kind. Wizenened with young, she thought she knew how to hold back sunsets with her tongue.

HOW YOU TASTE THE APPLES

The winner of Yolo County Fair's 1984 First Prize for Apple Pies showed me how to keep my pie flute golden while it baked by simply making an aluminum foil collar for the pie pan like you might for the Tin Man's whiplashed neck. While she showed me how to weave a lattice top for my cherry pie she told me her apple pie won because of the Gravensteins -- those large, yellow, red-striped apples she drove forty miles to Sebastopol to buy that only are ripe two weeks in July, the same time her husband's parents came from Pittsburgh to discuss her bad marriage getting worse. While her husband and his parents drank Wild Turkey in the living room in her kitchen she rolled the pie crust dough made of lard and butter for a nutty flavor and then she arranged inside the Gravenstein slices apple halfmoons-halfmoons a perfect swirl ad infinitum so that when they baked down in their juice the top crust would not go hard and fill with stale air. Many highballs later after her husband told his side of the story his parents came to the decision that their son's obligations to his baby and wife should not interfere with his personal happiness or life. The last place her husband took her

before he went away
was to the Yolo County Fair
and when she saw her first place blue ribbon
she covered her face to hide her tears
asked him to leave her alone with her pie for awhile
and he carried their baby away to see the clown.
The main reason, though, she told me she won
was simply because those Gravenstein apples
are the perfect sweet-tartness for pies.
You don't have to add lemon or cinnamon or sugar or spice.
That way
all you taste are the apples.

BEEF AND BARLEY SOUP

A year ago my mother wouldn't eat soup
not even Bouillabaise
or Vichyssoise
she called it goop
only fit for people sick with flu
or without teeth
not agreeing with my soup theology
or its St. Francis humanitarianism
to feed all the people
its Jesus way of healing
until a few months ago
when she became bedridden
and the doctor prescribed soup
so today I sauteed in olive oil and butter
a diced filet mignon
until it was crisp around the edges
and then I added diced onion, garlic
celery, green pepper
stirfried until tender then
added two quarts of beef stock
three par-boiled, peeled
and quartered tomatoes
a little basil, bay leaf, parsley
rosemary, thyme
some carrots
a cup of barley
salt to taste
and covered it all
and simmered it for a hour
until it was as thick as
white polka-dotted velvet.
The soup is good
said my mother between bites
was it hard to make she asked
and I said no